[श्री रजनी रंजन साहू]

बाहर कर दिया और जब वह बीमारी बाहर हो गई तो स्वाभाविक है वह दवाइयां भी कंट्रोल से बाहर हो गईं इस प्रकार वह दवाईयां भी सौ प्रतिशत दौ सौ प्रतिशत ज्यादा कीमतों पर बिकने लगीं जिन्हें अब गरीब अफोर्ड नहीं कर सकते हैं, कीमत चुका नहीं सकते हैं। मेरा सब से पहला मंत्री महोदय से सवाल है, जो इस मंत्रालय पर विचार-विमर्श हो रहा है उनका ध्यान दिलाना चाहूंगा कि यह नेशनल हैल्थ प्रोग्राम के बारे में अपना निर्णय लें और जल्द से जल्द इसका विचार करें कि कौन-कौन सी बीमारी नेशनल हैल्थ प्रोग्राम में रखी जायेगी और जो कमेटी की रिपोर्ट है और उस कमेटी को इस सदन में स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय ने घोषणा के साथ बनाया था, तो इस सदन के समक्ष उस कमेटी की रिपोर्ट को क्यों नहीं अभी तक रखा गया जबकि 6 महीने से ज्यादा उस कमेटी को अपनी रिपोर्ट दिए हुए हो गए हैं ?

उपसभापति महोदया, मेरा दूसरा जो प्रश्न है,

**उपसभापति** : मैं समझती हूं कि अभी हाउस लंच के लिए एडजर्न हो और उसके बाद आप जारी रखें।

**श्री रजनी रंजन साहू** : बहुत-बहुत धन्यवाद। उसके बाद मैं शुरू करूंगा।

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now the House is adjourned for lunch till 2.30 P. M.

The House then adjourned for lunch at twenty-nine minutes past one of the clock.

The House reassembled after lunch at thirty three minutes past tw of the clock. **The Vice-Chairman (Shri H. Hanumanthappa)** in the Chair.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA): Railway Minister will make a statement.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER—

**Accident involving No. 927 Bangalore-New Delhi Karnataka Express on 18th April, 1989.**

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): Sir, I deeply regret to apprise the House of an unfortunate accident to train No. 927 Down Bangalore-New Delhi Karnataka Express at about 14.36 hrs. on 18-4-1989 on the Bina-Jhansi double line section of Jhansi Division of Central Railway. While this train with two engines and 21 coaches was on run between Lalitpur and Dailwara stations, thirteen coaches marshalled 7th and 9th to 20th from train engines derailed, of which 9 coaches-10th to 18th capsized. Due to this derailment as per available information, 69 persons lost their lives, 89 dersons sustained grievous injuries and 127 sustained simple injuries.

Immediately on receipt of information about the accident, Medical Relief Vans from Jhansi and Bina were rushed to the site. Divisional Railway Manager, Jhansi along with his officers immediately left for the site of accident.

Soon after getting the information I proceeded to the site by road and remained there through the night to oversee rescue arrangements and meet patients in the hospitals at Lalitpur and Jhansi and later at Gwalior.

Member Engineering, Railway Board also left for the site from New Delhi.

General Manager, Central Railway accompanied by other senior officers left Bombay by air to oversee the relief arrangements.

Shri C. K. Jaffer Sharief, Union Minister of State in the Department of Coal in the Ministry of Energy and Shri N. D. Tiwari, Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh also visited the site of of accident and the injured persons in the hospitals.

The injured persons were taken to the Civil hospital at Lalitpur soon after the accident. The local civil administration and people of Lalitpur also responded promptly and rendered valuable assistance in rendering medical aid to the injured.

Arrangements were made to transfer 32 of the injured persons to Railway hospital at Jhansi the same evening.

The stranded passengers and those of the injured who wanted to continue their journey after medical aid were cleared by the various trains viz., Jhelum Express, Shatabdi Express and G.T. Express. A special train was also run from Jhansi to New Delhi to clear all the left-over passengers of Karnataka Express.

Special arrangements were also made at New Delhi station for medical attention to the injured arriving by the various trains.

Ex-gratia relief to the next of kin of the identified dead and to those with grievous and simple injuries has been arranged. This will be in addition to the compensation payable to the injured and to the next of kin of the deceased under the directions of the Ad-hoc Claims Commissioner to be nominated by the Uttar Pradesh State Government.

Commissioner of Railway Safety, Western Circle, under the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism who also reached the site commenced the statutory inquiry into this accident on 21-4-1989.

Along with my colleague, Shri Mahabir Prasad and all railwaymen and women, we extend our deep condolences to the kith and kin of those who lost their lives. Our sincere sympathies to the injured in this unfortunate accident. I am sure that the House joins us in extending deepest condolences to the bereaved families.

SHRI KAPIL VERMA (Uttar Pradesh): Mr. Vice Chairman, Sir, this is the most unfortunate accident. In fact, it is more unfortunate in the sense that this is the second major accident in less than ten months, Earlier, in July, 1988 , there was an accident near Quilon involving the Island Express in which 105 people lost their lives and as the hon. Minister mentioned in his statement today, 69 persons lost their lives in this accident.

Many accounts have appeared in the newspapers and there have been radio interviews and other things. But there is one point which has struck me. In bogie number 7 very unusual sounds were noticed by the passengers. The passengers complained about this at two places, at Bhopal and at Itarsi. I would like to know from the hon. Minister why attention was not paid to this. As has been written in one article, the custom is, the convention is, the practice is, as soon as a serious defect is found in a bogie, it is detached and the passengers are transferred to another bogie. Why was it not done in this case? In this connection, I am reminded of the accident involving the Tamil Nadu Express, I think, in August, 1986. It was a case of bogie defect. This was the reason given at that time. In the case of the Karna aka Express, the passengers have complained of speed, high speed. Therefore, I would like to know what was the speed at which the train was running at that time. This is a jaded track. Though the Shatabdi Express is being run on this track and the Jhansi-Bhopal track is part of it, unfortunately, this is a bad patch. Even the speed of the Shatabdi Ex-

[Shri Kapil Verma]

press is lowered when it goes on this track. I would like to know when the track was renewed and when repairs were carried out. Was it upgraded? I am asking this because if you look at the Government's own reports, 15,300 kms. of track were still to be renewed a year ago.

Therefore, the situation is not very satisfactory. The passengers who travelled by this train have complained that even while the train was negotiating a culvert—there was a five-metre-high embankment—the speed was not reduced and with the result the train derailed. Then, I would like to know about the maintenance system which has been adopted. I have been told that the maintenance system is as old as 1853. No major changes have been made in the system. This system of meter packing, use of crow bars etc. was introduced in 1853 when the railway services were started in the country. That, system, with minor changes, still continues. Therefore, whether modern methods are going to be used to correct and repair those things has to be considered.

Sir, there have been complaints about very inadequate rescue and relief operations. This is very important. As some of the passengers had related the incident to the newspapers--it came even on the radio—the operation started four and a half hours late and it took a lot of time. As some of the passengers have said, some very good people travelling by that train, some military personnel, and also some local people who ran some voluntary organizations came to their rescue, took them out of the train and took them to the hospital. The railway authorities did not have even the apparatus to cut the twisted steel. Some businessman brought it from Lalitpur. The Lalitpur hospital is itself a very small hospital, and it was in a very bad shape at that time. Also I would like to know from the Minister whether he had visited the injured at the Lalitpur hospital or not, because there is a controversy about it.

About the cause of the accident, there are various reports in the newspapers. Some people say the track was responsible, some say the train was responsible for the accident. I would like the Minister to throw light on it because, as the figures show, this year compared to last year, the accidents due to tracks rose from 24 to 30 and 19 out of 30 accidents--major accidents- had taken place because of driver's fault. The Minister visited he place and so I would like to know from him *prima facie* what are the causes of the accident. He will probably say that the Commissioner of Railway Safety is holding an inquiry, but he can tell us whatever he has seen and what measures he is going to take to prevent such accidents in future—because he is a very competent Minister known for his ability and I am really sorry that in his regime such major accidents are taking place. So, what measures is he going to take to tone up the administration? I hope in rescue and relief operations some real improvement is made and human distress is relieved. At New Delhi railway station it was utter chaos. Nobody was told when the train was coming with the dead. Everybody said that the train was late only. Nobody was told about the accident and no proper arrangements were made there. I hope the Minister would reply to my queries.

THE VICE- CHAIRMAN (SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA) : I request the Members to be brief. Shri Narayanasamy.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY (Pondicherry) : Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, the accident that took place in the Jhansi Division of the Central Railway is a major accident. Apart from this, es-

pecially in the Southern Railway and the South-Central Railway, major train accidents are frequent.

Sir, if you go through the honourable Minister's statement, you will find that relief measures have been given in detail but more details relating to the accident have not been given. It is in just one line only, that bogies No. 7 and 9 to 20 have derailed, and then he gives a reason. Is it a fact that the engine driver complained at Itarsi and Bina stations that the train had developed some strange kind of jerk and was it rectified? Secondly, the officials, while informing about the matter, also did not rule out the possibility of sabotage. That is also reported. In the newspapers I found that the number of persons who died due to this accident was more than 75. Even on the first day it came in the papers. But the Minister has given the figure as 69. I cannot understand this. Immediately after the accident took place, the news came that more than 75 people died, but the Minister has given us the figure of only 69. The Minister has also said that it was as per the available information. I would like to know from the Minister whether this figure is correct or the figure which has been published in various news paper including those in Karnataka, is correct.

This is the Karnataka Express, and most of the passengers who were travelling by that train were from Karnataka. But none of the public men from Karnataka have been involved for the purpose of deciding the quantum of relief. The Uttar Pradesh Government has been given the power to decide the quantum. The Karnataka Government has not been involved. The victims are from Karnataka. A person from Karnataka will be able to do the job better compared to the officials from the U.P. Government. I would like to know the hon. Minister's response in this regard.

The Minister has said that the *ex gratia* payment has been given as per the statutory requirement. Has any preliminary enquiry been made before going into the matter of deciding what the main cause was of the accident ? Has any preliminary investigation been made ?

Also I would like to know whether the brake was applied by the driver when the train was passing through that culvert, as a result of which there was a jerk, and so other bogies derailed. Therefore, I would like to have this clarification from the hon. Minister in this regard.

श्री हरी सिंह (उत्तर प्रदेश) : माननीय उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, यह रेलवे का बड़ा गंभीर एक्सिडेन्ट हुआ । इसमें बहुत सी जानें गई और प्रायः देखने में यह आ रहा है कि आज सारे देश में इस तरह के वाक्यात बहुत हो रहे हैं । कहीं ऐसा तो नहीं है कि इसके पीछे योजनाबद्ध तोड़-फोड़ की ताकतें लगी हों और वह हमारे रेलवे सिस्टम को बर्बाद करके हमारी साख को दुनिया की नजरों में गिराना चाहती हों ? यह पहलू भी क्या मंत्री ने देखा है ? साथ-साथ मैं यह भी स्पष्टीकरना चाहता हूं कि जिस रफ्तार से यह रेल इंजन और रेल जा रहे थे क्या उसकी पटरियां उसके लिए फिट थीं या नहीं ? कब उसकी जांच की गई, कब उसको फिट पाया गया ? मेरी जानकारी में आया है कि वह रेल की जो पटरियां हैं वह इतनी रफ्तार की और लंबी गाड़ी को ले जाने के लिए कमजोर थीं, वह बदली जानी चाहिए थीं, लेकिन उनको नहीं बदला गया । उनकी जांच भी नहीं हुई । यह भी कहा गया है कि इंजन और पटरियों में कुछ आवाज आ रही थी उसका नोटिस नहीं लिया गया । तो यह इतनी बड़ी दुर्घटना हो गई, इसको बहुत गंभीरता से लेना चाहिए आगे होने वाली घटनाओं के लिए । मैं यह भी

[श्री हरी सिंह]

जानना चाहता हूं कि क्या सरकार ने, रेल मंत्रालय ने यह निश्चय किया है कि जो परिवार या लोग मर गए हैं, क्या उनके आश्रित लोगों को, जो बेरोजगार हैं, जिनके घर में कोई कमाने वाला नहीं रह गया, देखा गया है, कि कई परिवार ऐसे हैं जो पूरे के पूरे खतम हो गए हैं सिर्फ बच्चे रह गए हैं, तो क्या उनको नौकरी देने के लिए कोई सुझाव उनके मन में है और क्या धनराशी निश्चित की गई है, जो मर गए हैं उनको देने के लिए। साथ-साथ मैं यह भी चाहता हूं कि यह जो रफ्तार आजकल तेजी से बढ़ाई जा रही है, तो क्या सरकार यह निश्चय करेगी कि हमारी पटरियां तेज रफ्तार में चलने वाली गाड़ियों को ले जाने में समर्थ हैं भी या नहीं ? इसके लिए कोई कमैटी या कोई इक्वायरी या कोई डिपार्टमैंटल या टास्क फोर्स बनायेंगे कि जो सारे रेलवे ट्रेक की जांच करेगी। मैं यह स्पष्टीकरण आपके माध्यम से रेल मंत्री जी से जानना चाहता हूं।

**डा० रत्नाकर पाण्डेय** (उत्तर प्रदेश) : माननीय उपसभाध्यक्ष जी, कर्नाटक एक्सप्रेस हमारे देश की प्रेस्टीजियस ट्रेनों में से है। राजधानी, कर्नाटक, शताब्दी एक्सप्रेस, ये सब सबसे अधिक गति से चलने वाली ट्रेनें हैं और देश के एक छोर से दूसरे छोर तक चलने वाले लोग इसमें यात्रा करते हैं और जो ललितपुर और दैलवाड़ा स्टेशनों के बीच में दुर्घटना हुई है 18 अप्रैल, को; वह चिंता का विषय है आए दिन दुर्घटनायें होती रहती हैं और स्वयं रेलवे की रिपोर्टस में हमें पढ़ने को मिलता है कि बहुत सी रेल की पटरियां पुल और बहुत से रेल विभाग द्वारा प्रयोग में लाए जाने वाले अस्थाई महत्व के जो साधन हैं....

उनका कार्यकाल समाप्त हो चुका है बड़ी पुराने पड़ चुके हैं। जैसा मेरे अन्य माननीय सदस्यों ने जानना चाहा है कि 69 यात्रियों को मृत्यु हुई और 89 व्यक्तियों को गंभीर चोट आयी और 127 को मामूली चोट आयी तो जिन 89 को गंभीर चोट आयी थीं उनमें से क्या किसी और का भी निधन हुआ है और 69 व्यक्ति जो इस संसार में नहीं रहे उनके आश्रितों को नौकरी दिए जाने के विषय में क्या रेल मंत्रालय ने कोई पहल की है ? जहां तक पेंशन देने का प्रश्न है चाहे यू०पी० गवर्नमेंट दे या रेल मंत्रालय दे जिन्दगी की कीमत पैसा से नहीं आकी जा सकती। जिनकी जानें गयी हैं क्या उनके आश्रितों को स्थायी रूप से भरण-पोषण के लिए रेल मंत्रालय कुछ करने जा रहा है ? डिब्बे पटरी से उतरे तो मैं जानना चाहता हूं कि एक्चुएली एक्सीडैन्ट का कारण क्या है ? किस रूप में एक्सीडन्ट हुआ है इसका स्पाट विवरण इसमें नहीं दिया गया है। डिब्बे पटरी से उतर गए और उसमें लोगों की जानें गयी उसके लिए रेल मंत्री जी ने अपनी सहानुभूति प्रकट की है, रेल विभाग ने प्रकट की है, हम लोगों ने प्रकट की है। उसको ध्यान में रखते हुए क्या चिकित्सा सुविधा के अभाव में कुछ लोगों ने दम तोड़ा है ? इन सब बातों को जानने के साथ-साथ मैं विश्वास करूंगा कि पूरा रेव्यू कराया जाएगा और स्थायी रूप से प्रयोग में आने वाली रेल पटरी या ट्रेक्स उन पर इमीडियेटली मंत्री महोदय कार्रवाई करेंगे।

SHRI GHULAM RASOOL MATTO (Jammu and Kashmir) : I associate myself with the hon. Minister in offering my condolences to the bereaved families.

I would only point out two things. We, in India, perhaps have not yet come to know or to do what is called the crisis management. The crisis management has to be the cardinal principle in such a situation. It is ironic though true that the Western Railwayman considers the Eastern Railwayman a foreign railwayman. They really say they are foreign. Would the hon. Minister consider that in the Railway Board itself at the Member level he will have a crisis management board ? The communications system of the Railways is, next to Defence, the best in the country. It is a shade better than the post and telegraphs system. Within a matter of minutes this board which can be constituted at the

Member level, will know about the accident site and then issue orders to the different agencies so that coordinated action is taken with regard to rescue and other points, which Mr. Kapil Verma has stated. I, myself, have noticed that other stations do not know when the train has come, what has happened and where the accident has taken place. Such a situation can only be tackled by the crisis management board and that management board can only be done at the Member level at the Central Railway Board. There is no other way by which this crisis management can be handled. We have seen this in the last few years that there are a lot of complaints that things are not done properly and it cannot be done unless there is a centralised agency.

The second point that I would like to ask—I have stated this in my Budget speech and I repeat—as in the case of airways that if an accident takes place, the victim automatically gets one lakh rupees on the production of death certificate. Ad hoc allowances and reliefs are given over and above this type of relief. I had computed on that and had given figures that on the basis of the income that the Railways have got, the accidents that have taken place during the last two years, the expenditure of this to the Railways would come to 0.05 per cent i.e. five paise on the total income. Then, we would pay Rs. 1 lakh to those who are killed and Rs. 10,000 to those who are injured. Will the hon. Minister reconsider it and categorically state that this type of insurance scheme over and above ad hoc allowance, ad hoc relief and other things shall be taken into account at the time of the accident ? Will the hon. Minister kindly react to these points ?

SHRI KAMALENDU BHATTACHARJEE (Assam): Respected Vice-Chairman, Sir, I want to extend my deepest condolence to the bereaved families and my heart bleeds and my sympathies go to those who are deceased and who have received injuries grievous and simple. Basically I am a political being and cannot resist the temptation of making an observation and I may be excused for this, that this derailment of Karnataka Express has nothing to do with the derailment of the Karnataka Government. I want to repeat what the hon. Member, Mr. Matto has said. I want to ask one specific question, whether the Railway Minister is seriously considering against backdrop of these two major accidents in the span of the last ten months. appointing one Member (Crisis Management) as they have Member (Engineering) and like that. That is number one.

Number two, I want to know whether it is a fact that medical relief vans have reached the place of accident late causing serious inconvenience to the affected persons.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY (Uttar Pradesh) : Sir, the accident indeed is very grave and the nation needs to know really what happened. The newspapers have interviewed a number of passengers and there were a number of stories putting the blame squarely on the driver. I would like to know from the Minister whether the driver is alive and what is his explanation. I mean the final judgement what really happened. The Commission of Inquiry would decide or their departmental inquiry would decide but what is the driver's version as to what really happened ? Obviously brakes were applied and the question is 'why' ?

We have the largest railway system in the world, in fact, one of the most gigantic systems. It is a very complex one. I have been told in Lucknow that the RDSO had worked on electronic development and magnetic area development by which many of these track weaknesses could be electronically detected. I do not know what the exact position

[Shri Subramanian Swamy]

is. I would like to know from the Minister whether he apprised himself of the latest position the world over on these track infirmities and their location through electronics. After all our trains travel nowhere near the speeds at which the French trains travel and the Japanese trains travel and there are hardly any accidents in these countries. There are accidents but very few. So the question is how they do it and how they manage it.

Finally, I would like to ask the Minister about his own statement reported in the Press that he does not rule out "sabotage". What does that mean ? Now, some time has elapsed since his first statement was made. Has he got something concrete to tell this House as to what he meant by that and is he now in a position to rule it out or rule it in ? What is the exact position ?

I would like to say that the Railways should invest, perhaps, in second-hand helicopters from the Army so that they could reach the site of the accident much faster and evacuate some people who can be saved if timely assistance is given. Here they have to rely either on the Indian Airlines or on the roads and so invariably the complaint always is that the relief came late and people came to find out about them late. Here I do not think there is any harm if the Railways invest in a few helicopters which should be, of course, used for official work and this could be then deployed for providing quick relief and reaching these places. Thank you.

3.00 P.M.

**श्री रामचन्द्र विकल (उत्तर प्रदेश) :** उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, जैसा कि रेल के मंत्री जी ने कहा मृतकों और जख्मियों के प्रति हम सभी की समवेदना है। मैं भी उनके साथ एसोसियेट करता हूं। साथ ही मैं यह भी जानना चाहता हूं कि अभी केरल में सड़क दुर्घटना हुई, और अनेक दुर्घटनायें हुई हैं और कई माननीय सदस्यों ने कहा कि यह साजिश तो नहीं है, षड्यंत्र तो नहीं है तो क्या इसका मंत्री जी ने कुछ पता लगाया है या नहीं लगाया है? दूसरा, सवाल उठ रहा है कि शायद गति तेज थी और रेल में भी अंदर से आवाज आ रही थी। इस तरह का सवाल कई लोगों ने उठाया है। यह सवाल सदस्यों की तरफ से भी उठा है और समाचार पत्रों ने भी उठाया है। तो मैं जानना चाहता हूं कि क्या इसके संबंध में मंत्री जी ने कोई जानकारी ली है ? इस दुर्घटना में 69 जो मरे है, जो दुनिया से चले गये और 127 जो जख्मी हैं तो मैं मंत्री जी से यह भी जानना चाहता हूं कि क्या ऐसे लोगों की सही सही सूची बन गई है या नहीं कि वे कहां के रहने वाले थे, उनका क्या एड्रेस था क्या पता था ? रेल में कोई पता लिखाकर नहीं बैठता जिस तरह से हवाई जहाज में बैठते हैं। तो क्या मंत्री जी उन लोगों की सही सूची बना पाये हैं या नहीं ? तीसरा, मैं यह जानना चाहता हूं कि जो मृतक है, जो जख्मी हैं उनकी सहायता केन्द्रीय सरकार करे या राज्य सरकार करे, इसके बारे में वे कुछ निश्चय कर पाये हैं ? मैं भट्टू साहब से सहमत हूं कि हवाई जहाज और रेल में एक ही तरह के प्राणी होते हैं। हवाई जहाज में बैठने वाले को ज्यादा सहायता दी जाय और रेल में बैठने वालों को कम मिले यह ठीक नहीं है। बल्कि जो गरीब आदमी होते हैं वे ही रेलों में बैठते हैं। इसलिए उनको ज्यादा सहायता मिलनी चाहिए। इस पर भी क्या मंत्री जी सोच रहे हैं या नहीं सोच रहे हैं। ? मैं वर्मा जी की भी बात से सहमत हूं और मैं भी यह जानना चाहता हूं कि क्या आप कोई ऐसी वैज्ञानिक विधि निकालने के बारे में सोच रहे हैं कि अगर रेल की पटरी उखड़ जाय तो उसके बारे में पहले से ही मालूम हो जाय। तो सरकार क्या कोई ऐसा यंत्र बनाने की सोच रही है ताकि जब रेल की पटरी खराब हो और किसी कारण से दुर्घटना की संभावना हो तो उसका पहले से ही पता लग जाय।

साथ ही मैं यह भी कहना चाहता हूं कि सड़कों पर लिखा रहता है कि ना पहुंचने से देर से पहुंचना बेहतर है। लेकिन रेलों में गति बढ़ाई जा रही है चाहे लोग पहुंचे या न पहुंचे । क्या इसके बारे में भी कोई चिंतन हो रहा है कि हम रेलों की गति सीमा को कम करें । अगर हमारी रेल की पटरियां सक्षम नहीं हैं तो क्या यह जरूरी है कि हम गति को तेज करें ? यह जरूरी है कि हम दुनिया में यह यश प्राप्त करने की कोशिश करें कि हमारे देश में भी उसी गति से रेल गाडियां चलती हैं जिस गति से जापान में चलती हैं । इसके कारण यदि दुर्घटना होती रहे क्या इससे हमारा यश बढ़ेगा ? इसलिये अगर हमारी रेल की पटरियां सक्षम नहीं हैं तो हम गति को तेज न करें। सड़कों में लिखा होता है कि इतनी गति सीमा में ही वाहन चलायें । तो इसी तरह से अगर रेल की पटरियां इसके लिये सक्षम नहीं हैं तो, उनमें क्षमता नहीं है तो रेलों की गति कम करने की आवश्यकता है । क्या इस पर भी मंत्री महोदय विचार करेंगे ?

इन शब्दों के साथ में आपका आभार मानते हुए कहना चाहता हूं कि जख्मियों की मदद जो अभी तक कम हुई हैं वह तेजी से होनी चाहिये और जो मृतकों और जख्मियों की सहायता दी जानी है वह अधिक से अधिक मात्रा में दी जानी चाहिये। यह बात सही है कि मौत का पैमाना पैसा नहीं हो सकता है लेकिन इसमें कितने ही बेचारों के परिवार उजड़ गये हैं । इसलिये जो उनकी सहायता दी जानी है उसमें तेजी लाई जानी चाहिये । इस कार्य को केन्द्रीय और राज्य सरकार दोनों मिलकर करें और वे अधिक से अधिक सहायता इन लोगों को पहुचाने का प्रयास करें और भविष्य में इस प्रकार की दुर्घटनाओं से कैसे बचा जा सकता है इसके लिये वैज्ञानिकों की सहायता से नये उपाय ढुंढने की सरकार कोशिश करे ताकि भविष्य में इस प्रकार की दुर्घटनायें न हो सकें। धन्यवाद।

SHRI VISHVJIT P. SINGH (Maharashtra): Mr. Vice-Chairman Sir, any system is as strong or as weak as the weakest link in the chain and I think, our purpose today is to identify that link and in future, the hon. Minister has to identify what is the weakest link in this chain and that link has to be identified and that has to be replaced . There has been a lot of speculation in the newspapers and in this House, various speakers have mentioned this and I would like to reiterate this-the condition of the track. Everybody has talked about the condition of the track and the condition of the rolling stock, both I know ever since this particular hon. Minister has come into this department, he has spent a huge amount of money on regeneration of track and regeneration of rolling stock. I think, he has done more in his tenure than was done in the last 20 years. But it is not enough Sir. And in the absence of regeneration of the track and of the rolling stock, can we afford to have these superfast trains? Can we afford to have them on antiquated track and antiquated rolling stock? I would like to know from the Minister what the condition of that particular track was. Was it a track which had been renewed? Has it been passed for this kind of speed? Was there any plan with the Railways that eventually this was going to be regenerated? I would like to know the details of the track.

The second part now, which is very important. There has been a lot of speculation again in the media by socalled experts —I do not know whether they are really experts but they claim to be experts and they write in the newspapers and mazagines —and various Members also mentioned it here, about the business of the brake. Was a brake applied? And was this accident a result of that brake? There has been a certain amount of speculation that in the previous accident which took place a few months ago there was an

[Shri Vishvjit P. Singh]

identical condition. The train was a very fast train and as it was coming close to a culvert or a bridge, suddenly the brakes were applied and the train derailed. Is it true that this accident also is similar to the accidents which took place in the past ? If so, what is the honourable Minister doing about it? Are we going to take some kind of safety measures? These are the two main points to which I would like an answer from the honourable Minister. I know, I am well aware, that everything possible is being done in terms of inquiry, in terms of relief, in terms of everything. I am very grateful to the honourable Minister for doing every thing possible I would like answers from him to the two main questions which I posed above.

**श्रीमती वीणा वर्मा** (मध्य प्रदेश) : उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं मंत्री जी से थोड़े से स्पष्टीकरण चाहूंगी, पहली बात तो यह है कि वह जो ट्रेन चल रही थी, वह किस स्पीड से जा रही थी और कितनी स्पीड अलाऊड थी ? उसका डिफेंस क्या था? दूसरा यह कि ऐसा यात्रियों से मालूम हुआ और अखबारों में पढ़ा कि सैकेण्ड ए० सी० में अलार्म चेन खींची गयी, और अगर खींची गयी थी, क्या पूर्व सूचना थी कि या कुछ घबराहट था या कुछ पहले से आभास हो गया था कि पटरियां गड़बड़ हैं और अगर नहीं खींची जाती तो और ज्यादा भयानक दुर्घटना होती ? तीसरा यह कि दिल्ली स्टेशन पर इन्क्वायरी की कोई लिस्ट नहीं थी और बहुत देर से आयी, जिसकी वजह से अव्यवस्था थी, बदइन्तजामी थी और पूछने आने वालों के लिये पानी की भी कोई व्यवस्था नहीं थी या इतनी गलत सूचनायें दी जा रही थीं। डेड बोडीज दूसरे दिन तक भी वहां पड़ी हुई थीं, उसका क्या कारण है ? इसकी इन्क्वायरी कराई जाये, मैं इसकी मांग करती हूं । लोग ट्रेन्स में मैडिकल फैसीलिटीज की व्यवस्था हम रख सकते हैं । ए०सी० कम्पार्टमेंट्स में या चेअर कार में रख सकते हैं, तो उसके लिये भी मंत्री जी कुछ सोच रहे हैं या नहीं सोच रहे हैं ? यह जरूरी है जैसे कि हमारे माननीय सदस्यों ने भी बताया और कहा कि क्राइसेज मैनेजमेंट रेल बोर्ड होना चाहिये , क्या ऐसा कोई बोर्ड आप स्थापित करने जा रहे हैं या नहीं ? रेलवे रिन्यूअल और मेंटेनेंस ट्रेक के लिये आप क्या करने जा रहे हैं ? यह रेलवे ट्रेक कब बनाया गया ? मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से इन बातों पर स्पष्टीकरण चाहूंगी ।

**डा० अबरार अहमद खान** (राजस्थान): माननीय उपसभाध्यक्ष जी मैं जो बातें पूछना चाहता था, उनमें से अधिकांश बातें आ चुकी हैं। मैं मूलत: एक बात माननीय मन्त्री जी से पूछना चाहूंगा कि भविष्य में इस प्रकार की घटना की पुनरावृत्ति न हो, इसके लिये माननीय मंत्री जी क्या कदम उठा रहे हैं? इसके साथ-साथ इस दुर्घटना में जिन परिवारों के मुखिया मर गये हैं, उन परिवारजनों के लिये क्या रोजगार की व्यवस्था आप कर रहे हैं, क्योंकि मरने वाला तो मर गया, लेकिन उनके परिवारों के जीवित लोग मरे समान न हों, यह सोचना बहुत आवश्यक है ।

**डा० गोविन्द दास रिछारिया** (उत्तर प्रदेश ) : उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय और साथियों, यह बड़ी दुखद घटना हुई है । मैं भी झांसी का निवासी होने के नाते मौके पर गया था और सिंधिया जी भी तुरन्त वहां पर पहुचे तथा व्यवस्था की । लेकिन वहां बातचीत करने से मुझे जो आभास हुआ, उस संबंध में मैं सिंधिया जी से जानकारी लेना चाहता हूं । जो लोग बच गये थे और जख्मी हो गये थे उनका यह कहना था कि उन्होंने नागपुर में कहा कि ट्रेन का एक विशेष डिब्बा बहुत ज्यादा हलचल कर रहा है । उसके बाद जब ट्रेन भोपाल पर खड़ी हुयी, तो भोपाल पर भी आगाह किया, वहां के रेलवे के जो लोग हैं, स्टेशन पर

जो लोग तैनात होते हैं, उनसे मिले और कहा कि इस डिब्बे में बहुत हरकत हैं, इसको देखा जाये। वहां कुछ रेलवे के अधिकारी लोग आये, थोड़ा बहुत उसको ठीक ठाक किया करके उन्होंने कह दिया कि झांसी पर इसकी व्यवस्था होगी। यह दुर्भाग्य था कि वह ट्रेन झांसी तक पहुंच नहीं सकी और एक्सीडेंट हो गया। मेरा निवेदन हैं कि जांच में इस बात को अवश्य शामिल करें कि जब आगाह किया गया, तो क्यों कार्यवाही नहीं की और मेरी समझ में उस एक्सीडेंट का वही कारण बना कि चार डिब्बे इंजन के साथ आगे निकल आये और उस के बाद जिस डिब्बे में आगाही की गयी थी, पहले वही डिब्बा खराब हुआ, पटरी से उतरा और उसके साथ ही उसके पीछे वाले डिब्बे धक्के से उतरते गये। वे पटरी चूंकि बहुत ऊंची थी, इसलिये लुढक कर नीचे पहुंच गये और यह भारी दुर्घटना हुई। इसमें खास तौर से सिंधिया जी ने मौके पर जाकर व्यवस्था की, इसके लिये आप धन्यवाद के पात्र हैं, लेकिन इसकी जांच में बहुत सख्ती होनी चाहिये, जिससे कि आगे इस तरह के ऐसे एक्सीडेंट्स न हो सकें। धन्यवाद।

SHRI MADHAV RAO SCINDIA : Sir, I do not have words to describe the intensity of our emotion in the Railway organization when such tragedies take place. We today feel deeply saddened and, in effect, after the first impact on the Railway organization, really speaking, this is naturally bound to lead to a very intensive process of soul-searching and a close analysis within the organization as to the possible lapses that might have contributed to such tragedies.

Sir, at the outset, I would like to repeat that railway safety is an area in which we are prepared to strike no compromise. It is given the miximun priority overriding all other priorities and and I think that due to the endeavour of the Railway staff, from the juniormost to the seniormost level, I know the futility of repeating statistics on such occasions because statistics are very poor consolation when such major tragedies take place improvement has taken place and the improvement in railway safety brought about by the efforts of thousands of railwaymen all over the country cannot be swept under the carpet or such occasions. Indeed, we must, from such occasions, learn to go forward into even more improving and bettering our record in railway safety.

However, there have been efforts. And as the honourable House knows, in the last five years the total number of railway accidents has come down by as much as 32 per cent. The incidence of train accidents per million train kilometers—there has been a quantum increase in the amount of kilometers done by our Railways—has come down by as much as 40 per cent. Sir, speacial care is given to the movement of passenger trains. And within the overall, total number of accidents, the reduction in the total number of accidents in which passenger trains are involved, has come down by as much as 41 per cent and come down in the year 1988-89 compared to the year 1978—79 by almost thirty per cent. This clearly reflects that much greater attention is being given to the area of railway safety. I am not for a moment making any excuse for this particular accident. I do not want to be misunderstood. The facts have also to be laid in front of the House for the House to make a proper assessment.

Sir, the number of collisions and derailments per million

[Shri Madhavrao Scindia]

train kilometers, according to the latest available statistics of the British Railways for 1984-85 was 1.88. In France it was 0.88. In Germany it was 1.54. And in Japan it was 1.36. In the Rail way which is very comparable, the Pakistan Railways, it was 12.45. Sir, according to our statistics in 1988-89 it has been .81 per cent. I do feel that we should not lose sight of this. All we can do as human beings is to try our utmost within the available resources, within the level of sophistication and modernisation that exists, on a Railway which is the second largest in the world. But, Sir, we are not supermen. And I cannot see any railway in the world having a totally accident-free record. So our endeavour must be to try and minimise to the greatest possible extent the occurrence of accidents on our system. And wherever lapses are pinpointed, the strongest possible action, as the hon. Members have said, must be taken. Those responsible must be penalised and the most drastic action and quick action must be taken.

Sir, I will like to answer the hon. Members individually.

Sir, Mr. Kapil Verma did talk about this being the second major accident within ten months. Sir, a number of accidents that have taken place on the Indian Railways are due to certain lapses by us—mechanical, track, or personal lapses in driving or a lapse in concentration. And I certainly own these mistakes on the part of the Railway organisation. The moment a railway accident happens, unfortunately—and this is also understandable—in the heat of the moment sentiments are pitched at a very high pitch, Tempers are short and people are prone to rush to certain judgments. And one certainly finds a crop of hundreds of such railway experts who turn up and point out certain defects like. I remember in the Quilon rail tragedy. It was most unfortunate that responsible members of the Government in Kerala started blaming the various aspects of the railway working wihout any background knowledge at all or what really the cause was. I remember they talked of the track. The Commissioner of Railway Safety's report has been submitted. They have not blamed the rolling stock. They have not blamed the track. The Commissioner of Railway Safety found it difficult to pinpoint what could be the actual cause. Yet immedately after the accident, speculations ran rife. There were all sorts of allegations and accusations. Whenever these allegations and accusations are proved correct, we will be the first people to own up. What happens is that whenever the report of the Commissioner of Railway Safety or whatever inquiry report comes, it comes after a lapse of a few months quite naturally because it is a very technical matter but by that time the interest in that particular accident goes down. So, on the record and in public mind only the speculations that took place at the time of the accident remain fresh. I would like to point out that there was an accident on the Central Railway on the 7th of November, 1987—the derailment of the Tamil Nadu Express. It was a very major pile-up. Fortunately very few lives were lost. It was a very major pile-up if you pull out the newspapers and the reactions. As I said, tempers are short and people do jump up to conclusions, Again, the Railway organisation was the whipping boy. But, Sir, what happens today? Today, it is a proved case of

sabotage. It is a proved case. Apart from the Commissioner of Railway Safety saying that that is a case of sabotage. It is a proved case of sabotage where the culprits have been pinpointed. Today, no one will remember that. What you remember is the immediate reaction on the 8th of November, 1987, i.e. one day after the accident.

Similarly, Sir, the Quilon accident. The report of the Chief Commissioner of Railway Safety has come in. It is under examination in the Railway Ministry. He has attributed it to to an unusal sudden atmospheric disturbance around and about that region. Again, this accident took place 10 months ago. The pronouncements which the hon. Minister of Kerala chose to make in his wisdom and what the other hon. politicians of different colours and hues chose to speculate on that accident, will remain fresh in the public mind. No one is going to read today that the Chief Commissioner of Railway Safety has put it down as a result of tornado type of occurrence, an unusual atmospheric occurrence. He has drawn several parallels to such accidents which had taken place, abroad.

Coming back to this particular accident, the hon. members of the press asked me in Lalitpur. Mr. Swamy has mentioned it and some other hon. members have also mentioned it. They asked me : "what about sabotage"? Now, the sabotage theory is not mine. My answer to that was that the Commissioner of Railway Safety is going to conduct an inquiry.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: What I wanted to know is whether there was something on the track or something in the area which made you say that. Otherwise you could have said, "I will wait till the report of the Commissioner of Railway Safety was available".

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : I answered this hon. member of the press when he asked me about the sabotage that no possibilities could be ruled out. How can I say whether it is sabotage, whether it is rolling stock or whether it is track? I am not an expert. How could I have answered him in a positive way? An inquiry by the Commissioner of Railway Safety is taking place. There are certain circumstances, of course. Again, the moment I talk about it, it will be as if I am propounding the sabotage theory which I am not doing.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY : What are those circumstances ? The House has a right to know about them. Nobody has asked whether somebody from Mars came. You can say that you do not rule out the possibility of somebody from Mars coming and removing these things. Obviously, there are some circumstances. That is what I want to know.

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : I would just like to say here that by going into too many details I do not want to vitiate the inquiry by the Commissioner of Railway Safety at this juncture.

SHRI KAPIL VERMA : If there is some information *prime facie*, you may share it with the House.

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : Without prejudicing and without trying to vitiate the inquiry, since the hon. Members are pressing about it, I would say that on the night of 17th at 23·58 hours, i.e., 2 minutes

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before midnight, some tie-bars were found placed on the track. It is a foreign material. Tie-bars were not being used on that section of the track.

So, it was basically a foreign material. By foreign I do not mean from abroad, but foreign to the track structure and the track make-up. And this was reported . And a PWI was sent. After that was removed by the train which ran over the section, it got entangled in the engine, it is capable of derailing the train. But it got entangled in the engine, the engine of a goods train and the engine of the Tamil Nadu Express. At two minutes to 12.00, the tie-bar incident was reported and again, one hour later, more or less in the same area, at 12.50, i.e. at 00.50 hours another tie-bar was again found which again got entangled in the engine. Now this could be a mere coincidence . . .

SHRI KAPIL VERMA: Was it a new tie-bar?

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: I cannot tell you that. It could be a mere coincidence. But it was strange. I just say that it was a very strange thing that tie-bars which are not used on the tracks at that section were found placed, there. After it got entangled in the engine and was removed, another tie-bar was placed there, again within less than one hour of this particular incident. I have gone over the track myself. It is most unfortunate that one of the leading newspapers ini its editorial--I can understand junor staff reporting—had said that I did not even care to visit the patients in the hospitals. I spent the whole night, Sir, at the site and in the hospitals. I have come back to Gwalior sometime at 8.00 in the morning. I have spent the whole night at the site. It is most unfortunate. One cannot expect this to come from at least editorials. They have said that the Railway staff arrived five and a half hours late. It is absolutely misleading reporting. However, there may be some motivation there. But I went over the track at night. I went and saw the track. Some people pointed out, and again this is something for the commissioner of Railway Safety to look into. But along about 30 metres of one side of the line, the keys are lying along the track, the keys which go to clamp the railwayline to the sleepers are lying scattered. It is very surprising that hardly any of them have been damaged. In a railway accident, one would normally expect, all right, some keys pop out. Then one would expect some of them at least to get twisted and mangled. But it is again a strange thing. It would be a mere coincidence again that so many keys popped out along 30 metres and nothing came under the wheel. And it could be a coincidence. That is why, Mr. Swamy, you have really made me depart from my normal . . .

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: You mean I derailed you?

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: I am afraid, you have derailed me a bit. I have gone myself into an area where possibly it could be termed speculation before the . . .

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA) : Mr. Swamy is an expert in derailing.

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: That is why, when I was asked by the hon member of the press, I did not go into any details. But with this background in mind, I said, I cannot rule out any possibility. I did not go further than that. And I am still not convinced that it is a sabotage. I am still not saying that it is sabotage. It is for the commissioner of Railway Safety who is enquiring into it to find out and tell us, and if it is out fault to tell us in the strongest possible terms so that we in our own turn can take the stron-

gest possible action. And, therefore, (a) I am not hiding behind the statistics, (b) I am not offering any excuses until the Commissioner of Railway Safety's Report comes out. If the Commissioner of Railway Safety's Report comes out that it is a fault of the Railway organisation, I will be the first to own up, and I will be the first to try to rectify this. But if it comes otherwise, I think the understanding of the House is also required. It is a massive system. I would just like to tell you that information has been received from the NF Railway that on 23rd April, at 15.30, the Siliguri goods train met with an accident due to removal of fish-plates suspected to be possibly the working of Bodo militants. Now, on 23rd April at 12.25 hours, i.e. yesterday, patrolmen noticed one bomb-type object between Mahoba and Kabarai stations. Again it is the same locality. The accident took place south of Jhansi. This area is east of Jhansi. Train services remained suspended. On receipt of information the GRP Mahoba and concerned authorities attended the site, that is yesterday, military experts attended and blasted the bomb at 18.05 hours. Now these are incidents which we cannot ignore. These things are happening. It is very difficult, hundreds and thousands of kilometres of track how can you possibly go over every inch of track every minute of the day? And there are certain mitigating circumstances in the present prevailing atmosphere. Again since Mr. Swamy raised it, I must say that I am still being le[illegible] in that derailment that you l[illegible] caused.

Sir, I would just like to inform the House in fact I would like to seek and implore the hon. Members of the House to give as much cooperation as possible within their respective political parties to try and see that the ire or the demonstration capabilities of each political party are not manifested against the railways because it causes tremendous damage.

Sir, you know the result of the recent violent incidents during the Jarkhand bandh during the last three days; damage to tracks—20 incidents, other obstructions—2 incidents, sabotage to water pipe and pump house, 2 incidents, interference of OHE wire post-2 incidents, communications smashed—3, bomb blast—5, derailments due to removal of fish-plates—4, other cases of removal of fish-plates—5, fire on track and bridge and bridge—6, removal of Keys — 2. This is what has happend in the last three or four days. The Railway Minister and officers and staff are sitting and praying for all the 24 hours of the day. We are sitting on tenterhooks, because this is the sort of the atmosphere, because it is very difficult to operate the Jarkhand agitation is there, the Bodo militants are there. Then in Tamil Nadu, two or three months ago, similar sort of violent incidents took place, the Vanniyar Agitation was there. It is what people do not realise. You want to agitate all right go ahead. You want to go and burn down a building. Do it but at least give notice to the people sitting inside. But if you go and do something to the track, you have got innocent passengers travelling in that train who have got nothing to do with your agitation, who have nothing to do with the Government and you may end up in causing tremendous loss of life. The incidents of sabotage, fortunately with the blessings of the God above, did not end up in problems to passenger trains. The derailed trains were goods trains. It becomes then a matter of sheer coincidence as to which particular train is going to pass at that time. I think enough has been said on sabotage. I would like to again re-emphasise and reiterate that I am not attributing this particular tragedy to sabotage. I am not ruling it out also. But it is for the Commissioner of Railway Safety to go into it. I do not want to vitiate the atmosphere or vitiate the enquiry and it is only after he has made the inquiry that I myself and the railway staff and the railway officers can arrive at any conclusion.

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Sir, Mr. Kapil Verma talked about excessive shaking of the coach and the bogey. I also read about it in the press. I did make certain inquiries but to the best of our knowledge, no such complaint has been lodged at either Itarsi or at Bhopal. I will make further inquiries about it because I have read about it in the papers. In fact, one of the patients also talked to me about it. My preliminary inquiries are that no such complaints have been lodged to the best of my knowledge.

SHRI KAPIL VERMA: It might not have been done in writing. It might have been done orally.

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: Even then it is normally recorded. I will make further inquiries but let us not enter into a dialogue on this because otherwise there are a number of points which I will not have time to clear up.

He talked about complaints of speed. This section is cleared for, the maximum permissible speed on this section, Bina-Lalitpur, is, 120 kilometres per hour. And on the Lalitpur Jhansi section it is 130 kilometres per hour. This is the sectional speed. But each train is cleared for a particular speed. For Karnataka express, the maximum permissible speed is 110 km per hour. The booked speed of the train it would normally be going at, what the time-tables will give, was 100 km. But when the train crossed Lalitpur, it was going at about 85 to 90 km per hour. So I think at the outer, I would probably assess, that the maximum the train could reach within a kilometre and a half would have been nearabout 100 km. I do not think it could be more than 95 or 100 km. Again, that is some thing which the enquiry will bring out. As I said, the cleared maximum permissible speed was 110.

Sir, as far as the track is concerned, it was not due for renewal for at least another 6 or 7 years. Track renewal is done in accordance with the GMT--Gross Million Tonnes--that go over the track. There could be a particular track where GMT is in such large amount that it requires renewal after 15 years. There may be a track which may required renewal only in 20 to 25 years. This particular track, after being relaid has recorded 235 gross million tonnes, and track renewal is supposed to take place normally after 350 gross million tonnes. So, one would estimate that it would take another 5 to 7 years before this track would come up for renewal. We are very careful. Decision to run trains at a particular speed is taken after detailed experimentation of track and rolling stock conditions against the specified standards determined after detailed technical examination by RDSO. Increase in speeds is also after the Commissioner of Railway Safety is satisfied after having studied the details and after having studied experiments done by our RDSO. Until the Commissioner of Railway Safety gives us a go-ahead singal, we cannot go to that particular speed.

Some hon. Members mentioned about speeding up of trains. Speeding up of trains really has not taken place. There are two Shatabadi Express trains, one to Kanpur and one to Bhopal, and they have not reached high speed by any means. Their speed is 140 Km. per hour certain sections which have been cleared for 140 Km. speed. I do not think that is in any way entering the realm of high speed. Rajdhani Express when it was first introduced, was cleared for 130 km., and mail and express trains at 120 km. Many superfast trains are today running at 110 km. very few trains are running at 120 km. but most of them are running at 110 km. an hour. Rajdhani Express is running at 120 km. We have gone backwards in certain instances and it is our effort to try and restore those trains to what they were 20years ago. I do not think it is a spectacular leap-forward into the high-speed era which is causing a large number of accidents. I feel that Karnataka Express was travelling at 95 to 100 km

and even if it was travelling at 85 to 90 km. I am sure the same thing would have probably taken place. You cannot keep reducing the speed, otherwise it will take three days it reach Tamil nadu and it will take 4 or 4 days to reach Guwahati. I think a proper perspective will have to be kept in mind before coming to certain judgments which lead to the decision making. The fact is that railway accidents have gone down the fact is that passenger train accidents have also gone down. If such unfortunate tragedies do take place occasionally, it should not in any way block our movement forward and that we are doing very carefully. We are doing after very detailed examination, making no compromise with railway safety. I would like the hon. Members to be totally assured about it that any increase in speed, however marginal it may have been so far, is not done at the cost of railway safety.

Sir, maintenance systems have been improved. Tracking equipment, modernised tie taping equipment and more mechanisation is coming in which leads to greater precision and I think hon. Members are well apprised. I think my budget speech has also spoken about it. We are going forward in a significant manner as far as modernisation of trackling equipment and track maintenance is concerned. As far as the relief operations are concerned, the common complaint we heard is that the first to arrive at the spot were the local people or the District administration. Our tracks go through very deserted areas, very desolate areas. It is a vast expanse. When a bus accident takes place or when a motor car accident takes place or when a train accident takes place outside a city, it is but natural that the local people would be the first to reach the spot however much we may try unless it happens near our station Our effort is to ensure that our astaff reach the spot as soon as possible and provide relief. In his particular case, communication cables had snapped due to the acciedent. Jhansi received the information at 15·20 hours and the medical relief van from Jhansi was ordered at 15·29 hours and it left after 35 minutes. This is the normal time within which the concerned people are expected to spring in to action. We have kept the outer limit of 30—40 minutes within which the van should move. Here, the distance was considerable. The van left at 16·05 hours and reached the spot at 17·30 hours. By that time, the District administration reached there because Lalitpur is also the District headquarters. The local people also gave tremendous help.

On this occasion, I must express my very deep appreciation for the tremendous response given by the inhabitants of Lalitpur. It was very heart-warming to see them rendering help. Sometimes, people come to see an accident out of curiosity, pull out bodies etc. There is some initial reaction and then it wears off. But in this case, the inhabitants of Lalitpur stood there with patients, holding their hands and looking after them. They sat there the whole night. It was very heart-warming to see. I myself saw this when I visited the Lalitpur hospital, the Jhansi hospital and later on when I returned to Gwalior, the Gwalior hospital. I must express my appreciation to the people of Lalitpur for their tremendous response.

As far as New Delhi is concerned, New Delhi received the information at 18.40 hours because, as I said, the communication links had snapped. By the time the man walked to the next station, informed Jnahsi and Jhansi set everything into motion and informed the Railway Board, New Delhi and the New Delhi railway station, it was about 18.40 hours. The Central enquiry office and the announcers were advised about the accident at 19.05 hours; that is, within 25 minutes. From 19.10 hours onwards, the announcers at the New Delhi railway station and the Central enquiry office advised the public that the 927-down had met with an accident. The General

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Manager ordered the opening of an energency control and enqiury office at New Delhi at 19.50 hours and a control and special enquiry office with three telephones opened at New Delhi railway station, on platform No 1, at 21.00 hours Therefore, everything was put into operation.

There has been complaint that the list of the dead and injured was not readily available. Here, it involved a large number of passengers. The first thing that the railway staff do is to tend the injured, salvage as far as possible and see that the maximum number of people are rescued. Only then they turn their attention to preparing the list. They have to contact the people-half the people are in a state of shock-take down the names of the people who have not made reservations, etc. There are countless problems. Therefore, New Delhi is not really to be blamed. These things do take some time. As soon as New Delhi was advised about it—I think, it was somewhere around 2 a.m.—they got the first list and then supplementary lists started coming up. In the meanwhile, the Delhi Doordarshan's news room was informed about the arrangements at New Delhi and the information was carried in the English news bulletin between 21.30 and 21.50 hours about the various trains by which the passengers were being taken to New Delhi.

Mr. Narayanasamy talked about the number of dead. Sixty-nine tragic deaths have taken place. A number of newspaper have speculated about it. But the correct number is 69.

He talked about the Karnataka Government, the public representations not being involved in the quantum of compensation. This is not possible. Our trains have an all-India nature. It is no only the people of Karnataka who travel. There may be many people from Delhi who had gone to Karnataka and were coming back. There are many mid-way stations. So, where the accident takes place, the Chief Minister or the Government of that State advises us as to who the *ad hoc* Claims Commissioner would be. That person is appointed and he decides the quanfum of compensation. I think this is the best method that is practicable.

Shri Hari Singh talked about the possible *shadyantra* or conspiracy all over the country. I do not want to speculate on that, but you and I are alive to the situation that is being created by some people in some parts of the country. Certainly, there is a live danger and I think all of us should be extremely attentive and careful about any such possibilities that may exist. I think both of us are very much alive to this situation.

Then he talked about the rail track conditions. I have already clarified that there was nothing wrong with the rail track. We were totally satisfied with the rail track. Again if there was anything wrong with the rail track it will come up in the report of the Commissioner of Railway Safety, but as far as we are concerned, the rail track had passed all the tests that were necessary before allowing a train to run at that speed.

Sir, Mr. Ratnakar Pandey talked about track renewal programme. I must say that in these times when speculation runs riot it is so heartwarming sometimes to get support from leading newspapers who really try to give a realistic picture. I would like to quote here from the report of 'The Times of India' today to whom we are extremely grateful for support in this time of great mental anguish which we, as railwaymen, are undergoing.

The report has talked about track renewal. It says, the figures show that as against 9500 kms of track renewal during the Sixth Plan 19400 kms were renewed during the Seventh Plan, an increase of over 103 per cent. As for as concrete sleepers are concerned, there has been an increase of over 221 per cent over the Sixth Plan. As far as electrification, there has been an increase of 107 per cent over the Sixth Plan. And again in regard to route relay interlocking system there is an increase of 83 per cent over the Sixth Plan. Then the report talks about freight transportation and various other things which are not directly related to rail safety and rail accidents. So, there has been a massive track renewal programme. There has been a massive programme of attending to bridges which we feel need a little more attention. They are not unsafe bridges. They stood at as much as 2000 odd some years ago. We have brought them down only to 600. I would like to reiterate that these are not unsafe bridges but we feel that more attention is required to be given to them. We have stepped up our programme for attention and rehabilitation of bridges. Only 600 odd are outstanding out of 1,14,000 on the entire Indian railway system.

Sir, Mr. Ghulam Rasool Matto, talked about crisis management. There is a cell in the Railway Board which is activated during such an unfortunate occurrence. That cell monitors all the emergency provisions that are to be put into from the Railway Board itself. This is the system which we are already adopting and it comes under the general supervion of the Member, Traffic.

SHRI GHULAM RASOOL MATTO : Are you satisfied with its functioning? My request to you is to see that this cell should be 3-Member cell. All the three Members should monitor that cell and not the Member, Traffic, alone. You may kindly consider it. This is not a thing on which you need react now. But kindly take note of it.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA): You said in the budget speech. He has considered it.

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: We will check again whether this is adequate or not and if we find that it is not adequate, we will certainly try and supplement it and streng hen it in accordance with the suggestions that you have made.

Sir, Shri Subramanian Swamy talked about electronic equipment. As I said, again the system is massive. Our resources are very limited. Every thing is very very expensive in terms of money. But the RDSO had developed a few years back an electronic system of track recording in place of the conventional system which was hundred per cent mechanical. Now we are going on free electronic surface. It is also in extensive use. It helps to monitor the track geometry like alignment, age, cross level etc. It is done regularly on all important routes. Delhi-Madras, the periodicity Ms for group A' routes like Delhi-Madras, the periodicity is once in four month. Flaws in rails are now detected by ultrasonic flaw detector. Recently we have commissioned an imported self-propelled ultrasonic rail test care about which you must have read. It has been very helpful to us. It is much

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faster and much more accurate and it goes into much greater detail

Sir, I would just like to mention here that this particular track on the Bina-Jhansi section was monitored on 14th of February, 1989 with the track recording car and the results were satisfactory. In addition, we have the normal checks that take place by the AENs and by the PWIs.

Sir, I think I have more or less covered every thing except compensation. In the matter of compensation, again it being judicial in nature to determine who exactly is the successor who qualifies for compensation, ad hoc Claims Commissioner is appointed on the recommendations of the State Government. He then sets up his commission of compensation or court of compensation and those who claim compensation appear before him and he sends his directions. The families of those who have lost their lives are paid Rs. 100,000 and the compensation for those who are injured grievously ranges between Rs. 20,000 to 100,000 depending on the nature of the injury which again is determined by the ad-hoc Claims Commissioner. This is the compensation that is available in the Indian Railways. And we try and see that it is done speedily. But sometimes many State Governments are very slow in responding. But we keep on sending reminders and then it may take the ad hoc Claims Commissioner a few months to decide who exactly is to get compensation.

SHRI GHULAM RASOOL MATTO: Kindly see what the Airlines do.

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: Again I would like to reiterate, after having made all these clarifications, that it is a fact that the safety record of the Indian Railways has improved by a very very considerable figure and compares well with many railways abroad. Yet—and I have made this out in my reply —again I would like to re-emphasis—because people are very quick to jump to conclusions—that I do not believe in hiding behind statistics. This is not being offered as an excuse for any railway accident that takes place which ends in human tragedy. We are human beings and when a tragedy occurs, we are as shaken as the next person and we are as much concerned because we are much more directly responsible. Therefore, once the Commissioner of Railway Safety's enquiry report comes out, if it is found that it is the railway organisation which has failed, we will spare no effort in taking action against the people responsible, in trying to improve whatever lacunae or lapses that may have occurred in trying to improve our quest for modernisation of track maintenance, track structure and rolling stock and in owning the responsibility. Once the Commissioner of Railway Safety's enquiry report comes out, if it is our responsibility, we will be the first to own and along with that, in all humility, we also say that it will be our effort to learn from that mistake and improve further on the Indian Railways safety performance. So, no excuse is being offered. The sabotage theory is not my theory. I would suggest that all of us should await the result of the Commissioner of Railway Safety's report. My only plea is, whenever the Commissioner of Railway Safety's report does come out, let us all pay as much attention to that report as we do in the heat of the moment when a human tragedy strikes us.

Again I would like to express my deepest condolences along with my honourable Deputy Minister, all railway officers and all railway staff and express the deep anguish that we have experienced in the past few days because of the accident. Thank you.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA): Taking into consideration the mood of the House, I request Members to stand in their own places for a minute to condole the death of the victims of the accident.

(*Honourable Members then stood in silence for a minute*)

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA): Now the House will continue the discussion on the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. Mr. Sahu.

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**DISCUSSION ON THE WORKING OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE**—Contd.

श्री रजनी रंजन साहू : उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं कह रहा था कि सरकार का जो नेशनल हैल्थ प्रोग्राम है उस कार्यक्रम के तहत जिन बीमारियों को रखना है उससे संबंधित रिपोर्ट सरकार के समक्ष है उस पर विचार करके सदन के समक्ष रखें और उस पर कार्यवाही करें। दूसरी समस्या जो खास कर के गरीब तबकों के लोगों के साथ जुड़ी हुई हैं गरीब परिवार के बच्चों के साथ जुड़ी हुई है वह क्वालिटी आफ मेडिसन है। वेक्सीन बच्चों को दी जाती है उससे संबंधित बीमारियां हैं। हम लोग सब जानते हैं कि चाइल्ड इज दी फादर आफ मैन और जब उन बच्चों को बचपन में ही दवाईयां सही रूप में मिलनी चाहिए अगर उनको वह नहीं मिल पाती हैं और वह रोग से ग्रसित हो जाते हैं या वह दवाई कारगर नहीं होती है तो आगे चल कर वह सही नागरिक नहीं बन सकता है। इसलिये हमारा सरकार से खास कर स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय से निवेदन है कि क्वालिटी आफ मेडिसंस के ऊपर ध्यान दें। बड़ी-बड़ी कम्पनी द्वारा जो वेक्सीन बनाई जाती है वह भी खराब साबित हो चुकी है यह सरकार को जानकारी है और मैं यह चाहूंगा कि क्वालिटी आफ मेडिसंस में किसी तरह का कम्प्रोमाइज न करें और मूक दर्शक के रूप में न रहें। मैं इस संबंध में सदन और सरकार का ध्यान आकर्षित करना चाहूंगा जैसे कि मैंने कहा कि बच्चों को जो वेक्सीन दिये जाते हैं वह अच्छी क्वालिटी के नहीं दिये जाते हैं। विभिन्न बीमारियों से बचने के लिये वह वेक्सीन दिये जाते हैं जो कि सब स्टैंडर्ड पाये गये हैं उनकी पोटेंसी जीरो पाई गई है और सरकार इसे मंजूर भी कर चुकी है। सरकार ने इसे अपने अनस्टार्ड क्वेश्चयन नम्बर 1853 दिनांक 6 मई, 1987 में मंजूर किया है और मैं सरकार का ध्यान इस ओर आकर्षित करना चाहूंगा कि खास कर के पोलियो वेक्सीन जो सरकार द्वारा टेस्ट किये गये हैं और स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय द्वारा टैस्ट किये गये थे। 1985–86 में 13 सेम्पल्स टेस्ट किये गये जिनमें से 7 सेम्पल्स सब स्टैंडर्ड क्वालिटी के पाये गये। 1986-87 में 20 सेम्पल्स पोलियो वेक्सीन के टस्ट किये गये उनमें से 12 सब स्टेंडर्ड पाये गये यानी 60–70 प्रतिशत पोलियो वेक्सीन सब स्टेंडर्ड क्वालिटी के पाये गये हैं। यह सरकार अपने अनस्टार्ड क्वेश्चन में मंजूर कर चुकी है। तो मैं निवेदन करना चाहूंगा कि क्वालिटी आफ मेडिसिन के बारे में सरकार मुखातिब हो। बहुत सी एसी मेडिसिन्स हैं जिनके लिये सरकार के पास टेस्ट करने का कोई साधन नहीं है जैसे हिपेटाइट वैक्सीन मेनिनजाइटिस वैक्सीन या अन्य जसे मम्स, मीजल्स आदि, इनके लिये सरकार के पास कोई साधन नहीं है और जो एसे साधन स्थापित किये जायें, ऐसा स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय को सोचना चाहिये। इतना ही नहीं पोलियो वैक्सीन दिलवाने के बाद जो माता पिता निश्चित हो जाते हैं और समझते हैं कि हमने पोलियो वैक्सीन दिलवा दिया है लेकिन बाद में उसका कोई असर नहीं होता है क्योंकि वह सब स्टेंडर्ड होता है। इसलिये खासकर पोलियो वैक्सीन का क्वालिटी की जांच उन्हें करनी चहिये। मैं तीसरी जिस बात पर सरकार का ध्यान आकर्षित करना चाहूंगा वह जो अन्य दवाईयां सब स्टेंडर्ड पायी जाती हैं उनके बारे में है। इनके बारे में भी स्वयं सरकार या स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय प्रश्न 943 दिनांक 12 नबम्बर, 1986 में मंजूर कर चुकी है कि 16,768 सम्पल्स टेस्ट किये गये जिनमें 2535